

# DIGEST OF THE FOREIGN PRESS

## French on American Mediation.

**P**RESIDENT HARDING'S reply to the request of the Germans that he act as mediator in the reparation question has not been favorably received by French public opinion. There are several reasons why this is so, but the most important is the belief that the suggestion to Germany to submit further proposals promises to interfere with the French plans for the occupation of the Ruhr. It must be remembered that to one section of French opinion, the extreme Nationalists, the occupation of the Ruhr and the industrial districts of Westphalia is regarded as the best reparation France can hope to obtain and the best guaranty against German aggression in the future. Other sections of French opinion, which have no imperialistic tendencies, have become convinced that negotiations with Germany will never amount to anything and that it is necessary to apply the severest kind of pressure unless the Germans are to be allowed to avoid making just reparation.

The fact that the Germans received the American note with pleasure, interpreting it to mean that although the President would not act as an umpire, the United States would act as a mediator, has confirmed the fears of the French. They realize that the British and Italians are reluctant to consent to the carrying out of the plans for the occupation of the Ruhr and that the American note, by suggesting further negotiations with Germany, will stiffen the opposition within the entente to the French plans. The effect of this has been to arouse the Nationalists again to threaten Premier Briand with overthrow, if he shows any signs of wavering.

The conclusion which is generally reflected throughout the French press is that the allies have nothing to gain through the possible mediation of America and that whatever result that action may have will be of advantage to Germany. A number of papers urge Premier Briand to let nothing interfere with his plans. His policy should be to act quickly and to talk it over afterward.

## Bolshevist Aims in Middle East.

**P**ERSIA will be the next state in the Middle East to fall under Bolshevik rule, according to Gen. Noskoff in the Paris *L'Opinion*. The fall of the Republic of Georgia, Gen. Noskoff writes, provides the Republic of Moscow with a second and powerful outpost on its way towards Asia, the first of these being Turkestan. "The complete Sovietization of the Caucasus removes the last obstacles which separated the Russia of the Soviets from the Turkey of Angora, with which the commissars of Moscow appear to have concluded an accord concerning common action in the 'southeast direction.' Furthermore the Bolshevik success in Georgia will augment the prestige of the Muscovite Republic among the people of Asia. Turkey and Persia, neighbors of the Caucasus, remain unsettled and offer an excellent field of action to adventurers."

Gen. Noskoff asserts that the northern part of Persia is already under the influence of Turkestan and Bolshevik Azerbaijan. Nationalist Turkey, however, is in a better position to resist Bolshevik influence. Although it will be difficult for the Bolsheviks to overcome the obstacles arising from the questions of nationality and religion, their conquest of Georgia places them in an advantageous position from which to extend their operations to the south and east.

## Lord Northcliffe on Ireland.

**"A** lasting settlement in Ireland will come only when the normal demand of the Irish people is satisfied. To my mind, that demand is for complete autonomy within the four seas of Ireland. The demand for a republic seems to me unreal. Ireland does not wish to maintain an army, still less a fleet; but Ulster is a problem, disregard of which has shipwrecked many well-meant attempts at a general settlement. Still that problem is by no means as great as it was."

With this statement Lord Northcliffe sums up his conclusions regarding the settlement of the Irish problem which he discusses at length in the April issue of *The Nineteenth Century and After*.

Lord Northcliffe believes that there might have been an amicable settlement of the Irish problem had the government immediately after the armistice given assurance of their intention to approach the matter in the spirit of a peacemaker and of their willingness to recognize those Irish claims to which the debates has given expression. By allowing matters to drift, however, they drifted from bad to worse while a peaceful settlement became increasingly difficult.

Lord Northcliffe is convinced that a peaceful settlement will be reached and that Ireland will enjoy the greatest prosperity in her history, but this settlement will be made "only when the English public realize the futility of maintaining by force and under world-wide condemnation an absolute form of government such as we have always been the first to denounce in foreign empires." "It is," he continues, "no

use for us to assure ourselves that we must always be, because we have always been, in the right, and that if we only persist long enough in the course into which we have drifted the world will come to admire our skill in statecraft; nor can we gain anything by arguing about the inevitable. But these may seem no more than vain speculations at a time when, one after another, every interest in Southern Ireland is being alienated from this country by a policy of repression which involves in its destruction of life and property the whole social and economic fabric of the country. No settlement can now, I fear, be reached except through a truce, the necessity for which becomes hourly more apparent."

## The Austrian Loan Scheme.

**T**HE *London Financial News* gives the following summary of proposals for the relief of Austria which have been made to the council of the league of nations by the financial section:

1. That the allied war and post-war claims shall be suspended for not less than twenty years;
2. That the service of any external loan shall, until repayment, have absolute priority over all claims and liens suspended;
3. That immediate measures be taken, alike by Austria and by the states formerly included in the dual monarchy, to remove the barriers to trade between them;
4. That there should be a speedy settlement of the division of the debts of the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy;
5. That the Austrian government be placed in possession of the assets of the Bank of Austria-Hungary to an extent sufficient to reorganize its bank of issue;
6. That there shall be floated by public subscription an internal loan to fund the existing budget deficit, and stop the issue of further paper currency;
7. That the expenditure of the Austrian government, especially on subsidies and staff, be reduced to a minimum;
8. That securities accepted by the finance section be hypothecated to the service of loans and credits.

## German Propaganda—New Style.

It is easy to understand the obtuseness which has characterized Germany's conduct of foreign relations if the German people and their leaders are forced to rely on such information as is contained in the following statement which appeared in the *Hamburgischer Correspondent* recently.

"A German-American, prominent in political life in America, who came to Germany in order to get a clear idea of the real situation through a tour of several months and be able to report on it, states that an absolute change has taken place among American people in favor of Germany. Even the most obstinate Yankee has become convinced that the Germans have been wronged and that they have been deceived by English propaganda. They all wish to make restitution to Germany. Especially in banking and commercial circles it is now realized that Germany had not been conquered by military forces but by her misplaced faith in the honesty of Wilson's promises. The main thing now is for Germany to remain firm in regard to all further demands of the entente, as nothing has made such a bad impression in America as the weak and submissive attitude of Germany during the Versailles peace conference. Though skepticism of America by Germany has been justified, one may now rely upon America."

## Italian Near-East Policy.

**R**EPORTS from Rome declare that in response to the inquiries of the British government regarding a convention between Italy and the Turkish Nationalists, the Italian government have given the text of this convention to the British ambassador. It is said, however, that the text will not be published.

It is openly acknowledged that the Italian government support the demands of Mustafa Kemal and the Constantinople government for a revision of the Sevres treaty, which will restore the Smyrna enclave and Thrace to Turkey. Only when this is done, it is held, will affairs in the Near East become at all stabilized. It is also acknowledged, though not so openly, that the interests of Italy will be better served by a cordial understanding with the Turks than by support of the projects of the Greeks to establish their empire in the Aegean. Turkey possesses resources which Italy needs and the market for Italian goods in Asia Minor would be more accessible to Italian commerce under the rule of the Turks than under the Greeks or any of the industrial countries of Europe. The Italians, furthermore, have wasted little love on the Greeks, especially since the diplomatic triumphs of Venizelos which raised Greece, for the moment, into a formidable rival.

## British Out of Mesopotamia.

**F**OR SOME TIME there have been rumors regarding the withdrawal of the British forces in Mesopotamia. These rumors have it, according to the *London Nation and Athenaeum*, that Winston Churchill, the new colonial secretary, has settled the matter by assigning that territory as a kingdom to the Emir Feisal. This journal doubts that any such arrangement will permit the withdrawal of the British troops. It asks if the pro-British party is likely to accept an "imported monarch whose only claim to the throne is our favor." As for the rebellious element—the Kurds and Shiah Moslems—will they welcome an Arab prince? "If it took 200,000 men to hold down this element, what resources can Feisal bring with him to replace them?"

Referring to the oil controversy with America, the *Nation and Athenaeum*, continues: "While these doubts lead us to question the expectation that this solution will avoid the military burden of Mesopotamia, the publication of the official correspondence with America over our oil monopoly serves to remind us of the moral cost. Lord Curzon is a much more effective dispatch writer than Mr. Colby, and on the plane of mere legality he can make a plausible case by basing himself on the concessions granted by Turkey before the war. Such 'rights' had, however, no value apart from the decision of the allies to maintain them in the new circumstances. Lord Curzon is really arguing that our assumption of the role of disinterested protector over Mesopotamia altered nothing."

## Russ-German Trade Agreement.

**R**EFERRING to recent reports that a trade agreement has been signed by the Soviet and German governments, a correspondent of the *London Morning Post* asserts that the conclusion of such an agreement is not imminent. "It is true," writes this correspondent, "that a draft treaty worked out in Berlin between the foreign office and the Bolshevik emissary, Kopp, is now at Moscow under the consideration of the Soviet government, and it is possible the latter may be prepared to sign without further delay. But in any case the document must come back to Berlin for further considerations by the German cabinet before it comes into effect. The official attitude here is that as things stand Germany has no interest in pressing the matter to a rapid conclusion."

One reason for the absence of anxiety on the part of the Germans to sign such an agreement is the proved complicity of the Moscow government in the recent Communist uprisings in Germany. This has naturally reacted on the relations between Germany and Russia and the moment when some 3,000 Communists, members of the Third Internationale, are awaiting trial is not the most opportune for the conclusion of a treaty. One of the most important clauses of the treaty from the foreign point of view would permit each party to increase its commercial delegation in the other's capital to 120 persons. It is easy to understand that Germany may feel that she has enough Communists of her own—at least for the time being.

## Can Russia Really Trade.

Discussing the attitude of the American government regarding trade with Russia, the British *Western Press* says, "While holding that the British government took the right course in arriving at a trading agreement with Russia, we have stated that at the moment there is not much prospect of that country finding any great quantities of commodities to pay for the machinery and other manufactured articles it so sorely needs. These conclusions may at first glance appear inconsistent, but they are not. The government has accomplished two things. It has deprived the Bolshevik bureaucracy of the contention that the chaotic condition of Russia is due to a British trade blockade; it has answered the criticism of a large section of our own Labor party who held much the same view. Most of the commentators who have been to Russia agree that the Bolsheviks have made political capital out of allied hostility, and that the effect has been to strengthen their own hold on the reins of office. This propagandist weapon has now been taken from them, and if they fail to make use of the trade agreement it will be evident to all that the fault lies in the economic impossibility of a Communist system such as that introduced under the Bolshevik revolution."

This journal then reviews at length Herbert Hoover's statement on Russian trade, and agrees in substance with that statement. The opinion expressed is that there is little hope of a revival of Russian industry unless the funds which the Soviet government possesses are used for the purchase of machinery instead of for war materials.